

REMARKS

The courtesy extended to Joseph J. Catanzaro, applicant's attorney, by Examiner Lester L. Vanterpool during telephone interviews on December 18, 2009 and January 25, 2010 with respect to the above-identified application is sincerely appreciated. During the interviews, the art cited in the outstanding Office Action of September 22, 2009 was discussed, particularly newly cited U.S. patent no. 1,979,978 to Martin, and previously cited U.S. patent no. 3,198,300 to Tuttle. In particular, during the interviews the portions of the Martin patent which disclose coil- type springs was discussed, and proposed amendments to the claims as submitted herewith were also discussed. While no specific agreement was arrived at with respect to allowability of the claims, the present amendment is consistent with the issues discussed during the afore-mentioned telephone interviews.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §112

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 74-82 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112. The claims have been amended in a manner to overcome the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §102

In the outstanding Office Action, the following Claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. patent no. 1,979,978 to Martin:

39, 41, 42, 44, 53, 55, 56, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72 and 73.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a retractable strap device for a carry case, which comprises a flexible strap having at least first and second end portions, and at least a first strap retractor device mounted to at least a first part of the carry case, the first strap retractor device including at least two coil-type extension springs and arranged to bias the first end portion of the strap toward a retracted position with respect to the carry case. The first retractor device includes means associated therewith for take-up and storage of at least a portion of the strap. At least a second strap retractor device is mounted to a second part of the carry case and includes at least two coil-type extension springs, the second strap retractor device being arranged to bias the second end portion of said strap generally opposite to the first end portion of the strap and having means associated therewith for take-up and storage of at least a portion of the strap.

U.S. Patent No. 1,979,978 to Martin

Martin relates to a hand bag having a pair of carrying handles and a resilient device connecting each end of each handle to the body of the receptacle, the resilient device comprising a coiled compression spring disposed within the receptacle, and a pair of relatively-sliding overlapping members anchored to opposite ends of the spring. One member passes through an aperture in the side of the receptacle and being attached to the handle and the other member is attached to the body of the receptacle. The coiled spring and the relatively sliding overlapping members lie

close to and alongside the side of the receptacle.

ALLOWABLE CLAIMS

In the Office Action, the following claims were indicated to be allowable:

40, 45-52, 54, 57-66.

AMENDED CLAIMS

Certain of the claims have been amended to include the recitations of the allowed claims to place them in condition for allowance.

In particular, the following claims have been amended:

39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 53, 55, 56, 57, 59, 60, 64, 66,

67, 69, 70, 72, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, and 82.

New Claim 83 has been added to recite a carry case having a retractable strap device according to the invention.

Claim 39 has been amended to include the recitation of Claim 40. Claim 40 has been cancelled without prejudice.

With regard to Claim 53 as amended herein, it is respectfully submitted that the Martin patent does not disclose or suggest the invention as recited in this claim. In particular, the Martin patent does not include a housing mounted on at least one side of the carry case, wherein the housing is subdivided into at least two sections, the first section associated with one end portion of the carry strap, and the second section associated with the second end portion of the carry strap. Moreover, at least two coil-type extension springs are positioned in each section of the housing, one end being coupled to the housing and the other end being coupled to a slider device, each slider

device defining an opening for reception of a portion of the carry strap.

Allowance of Claim 53 as amended herein is respectfully requested.

With regard to Claim 55 as amended, Martin neither discloses nor suggests a housing mounted on each of two opposite sides of the carry case wherein at least two coil- type extension springs are mounted in each said housing and respectively coupled to opposed end portions of a flexible carry strap as recited in the claim.

With regard to Claim 56 as amended herein, Martin neither discloses nor suggests a retractable strap device wherein first and second strap retractor devices are mounted on each of two opposite sides of the carry case, wherein the end portions of a flexible strap are retracted into each said respective housing by inward forces provided by resilient springs as recited in Claim 56.

With regard to Claim 67, Martin neither discloses nor suggests a carry case having a retractable strap device, wherein at least one first strap retractor device is mounted to at least a first part of the carry case and includes at least two coil-type extension springs respectively attached to a first portion of the strap to bias the strap toward a retracted position with respect to the carry case, and the second portion of the strap opposed to the first portion being attached to a correspondingly opposed second part of the carry case, whereby the first strap retractor device has means for take up and storage of a portion of the flexible strap.

With respect to method Claim 70, it is respectfully submitted that Martin neither discloses nor suggests a method for providing a retractable carry strap for a carry case as recited in this claim. In particular, Martin neither discloses nor suggests the step of coupling one first end of a flexible strap to a first strap retractor device which includes at

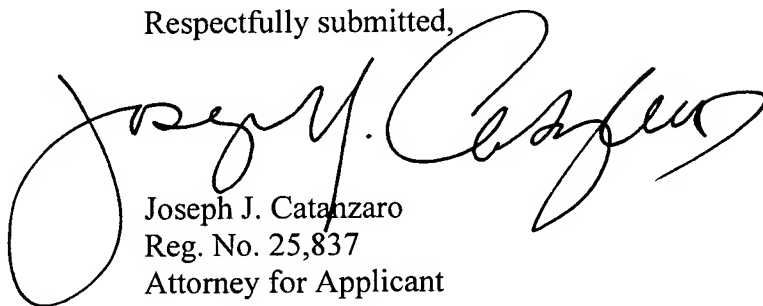
least two coil-type extension springs arranged to bias the first end of the strap toward the first retractor device, and the next step of mounting the first strap retractor device to a first part of the carry case.

New Claim 83 is directed to a carry case having a retractable strap device substantially as recited in Claim 39.

It is respectfully submitted that Martin neither discloses nor suggests the present invention, particularly as recited in the claims as amended herein.

Entry of the present Amendment and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joseph J. Catanzaro", is written over the typed name and title.

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